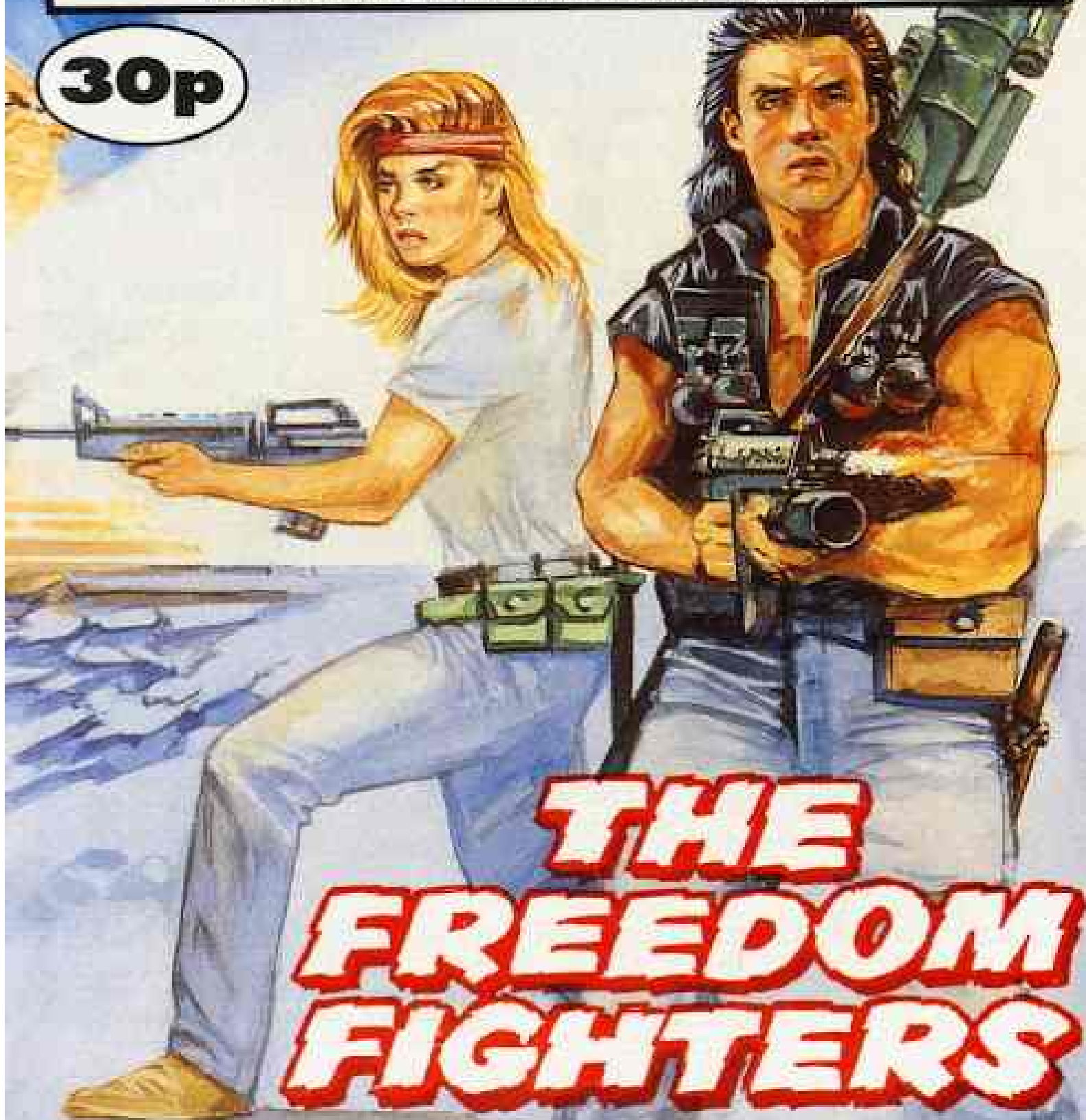


STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES No. 246

30p



THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS

We at "Starblazer" want to bring you the very best in Fantasy Fiction. To do that we need *your* help.

So that we can produce the kind of stories you want to read, please fill in the questionnaire on this page and send it to "Starblazer", D. C. Thomson & Co. Ltd., 185 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2HS.

If you don't want to cut your issue of "Starblazer", you can copy the questionnaire onto a sheet of paper.

And there's a chance to win a full-colour print of one of our new-style wraparound covers!

The senders of the ten letters which we judge to be the most informative will each receive one of the prints. We want to hear from you NOW!

Name **Age**

Address

What kind of science fiction do you most enjoy?

Please tick appropriate boxes.

If you dislike any type of story, place a cross in the box.

SUPERHEROES ☐ **FANTASY**
DUNGEONS **SWORD AND**
AND DRAGONS ☐ **SORCERY**
POST ☐ **HORROR**
HOLOCAUST ☐ **STAR WARS**
ADVENTURE ☐ **DR. WHO**
HUMOUR ☐ **MYSTERY**

Where do you normally buy your STARBLAZER? _____

Which is your favourite STARBLAZER story? _____

Which is your favourite character? _____

Which is your favourite science fiction movie? _____

Have you any comments to make about STARBLAZER... good or bad? _____



FREEDOM FIGHTERS

ON A PLANET ALREADY DECIMATED BY ITS OWN POLLUTION, AN INDUSTRIAL METROPOLIS POISONED THE ATMOSPHERE STILL FURTHER...

... THE PLANET NOW HAD NO NAME, IT WAS OF NO SIGNIFICANCE. BUT ONCE IT HAD BEEN CALLED EARTH!

4

THE OCCUPIERS OF THIS SMOG-LADEN PLANET WERE
A RACE OF BIPEDS KNOWN AS THE SHEK.



A Shek, a bipedal creature with a large, wrinkled face and a thick, shaggy coat, is shown in profile, operating a large, complex mechanical machine. The machine has various pipes, valves, and a large, circular component. The Shek is looking towards the right, and his mouth is open as if speaking. The background is filled with more mechanical parts and a hazy, smoggy atmosphere.

FAR ENOUGH...
DUMP NOW!

AS BRUTAL AND UNCARING AS THE GREAT
MACHINES THEY OPERATED, THE SHEK
DUMPED THEIR WASTE ANYWHERE...



A Shek is driving a large, mechanical vehicle through a city. The vehicle is a heavy-duty, tracked or wheeled machine with a large, circular component on top. The Shek is looking back over his shoulder, and his mouth is open as if shouting. The city in the background is filled with tall, industrial buildings and a hazy, smoggy atmosphere. The ground is covered in a large pile of rubble and debris.

BACK TO
THE CITY!

NIGHT — AND IN THE
DARKNESS, HUNGRY
CREATURES DESCENDED
UPON THE FESTERING
MOUNTAINS OF GARBAGE.

NIGHT ALSO BROUGHT THE HUNTER ...

STEADY, MY BEAUTIES.
I SMELL THEM TOO ...





... I SMELL HUMANS!



MY HOWLHOUNDS WILL
FLUSH THE VERMIN OUT.




RUN — RUN! IT'S
THE MANSLAYER!

HE'LL KILL
US ALL!




LATER —



WHY DO THE SHEK
HATE US, DADDY?

BECAUSE WE ARE
HERE, AND ALIVE.



WHY DO WE HAVE NO
FOOD OF OUR OWN?

BECAUSE THE
GROUND IS DEAD.
NOTHING
GROWS — SHEK
POLLUTION HAS
POISONED THE
SOIL.



ROLF WAS NOT FAR AWAY —



THE MANSLAYER — AND HE'S
STALKING MY FAMILY.




MUM, DAD ...
LOOK OUT!



WHAT IS
IT, SON?







I'VE GOT TO LOSE
THESE HOUNDS.

ABANDONED SHEK
MINEWORKINGS ...



MY ONLY CHANCE!

THE MINE WAS A WARREN
OF TUNNELS AND ROLF WAS
SOON LOST.

IT'S NO USE! THE HOUNDS
HAVE MY SCENT ...
THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER
ALL THE TIME.

A BRIDGE! DARE
I RISK IT?



THE ROTTEN BRIDGE GAVE WAY —

AAAARGH! I WAS RIGHT,
THEY ARE SMARTER
THAN I AM.



YUAAAAAAAAAAAAAGH!



WATER?

ROLF WAS CARRIED FAR UNDERGROUND BY THE SEETHING WATERS.

NOT GOING TO MAKE IT ... SO TIRED ... CURRENT TOO STRONG ... DRAGGING ME UNDER.

GRAB IT!

ROLF WAS HAULED FROM THE RIVER.

WHO ARE YOU?
WHERE AM I?

I'M THE LIBRARIAN ...

... AND THIS IS THE
BAD APPLE — NEW
YORK CITY!

AN ANCIENT CITY ...
BUT WHO BUILT IT?





INSIDE THE ANCIENT LIBRARY —



I SHALL GIVE YOU A KEY. A
KEY TO UNLOCK ALL YOUR
ANCESTORS' SECRETS —
THE KEY TO YOUR TRUE
SELF!

A KEY?

YES! IT'S
CALLED READING.



OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS ROLF LEARNED ALL ABOUT THE SHEK — HOW THEY DESCENDED FROM THEIR GIGANTIC STARSHIPS TO ANNIHILATE MANKIND AND LAY WASTE HIS CIVILISATION ...

... AND HOW THE INVADERS PLUNDERED EARTH, LEAVING IT ALMOST INCAPABLE OF SUPPORTING LIFE.

EARTH PEOPLE WERE SLAUGHTERED AND GIANT INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES BUILT ON THE KILLING GROUNDS.

BETWEEN LESSONS THE LIBRARIAN GAVE ROLF A GUIDED TOUR THROUGH THE RUINS OF NEW YORK.

WHO WAS HE, AND WHAT'S HE CARRYING?

HE WAS A SOLDIER — A WARRIOR AND FREEDOM FIGHTER! AND HE'S CARRYING A GUN.

A WARRIOR ... BUT WHO WAS THERE TO FIGHT BEFORE THE SHEK INVADED?

WELL ... OUR ANCESTORS USED TO FIGHT EACH OTHER.



SOME DAYS LATER — ON THE SURFACE —


STEADY, NOW ...

EASY ... EASY ...

I SPIT ON YOU!







IT'S A HUMAN, AND LOOK — IT'S
PRETENDING TO BE A
WARRIOR. HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

IT'S A JOKE!




JOKE'S OVER!





HE'S THROWING
ROCKS AT US.



THE "ROCKS" EXPLODED —



WHO ARE YOU?

A FREEDOM
FIGHTER! AND YOU?

MIA ... I'M
A SURVIVOR!

LATER THAT SAME DAY ...

WHERE ARE THOSE
TWO WHO JOINED US?

WANDERED OFF
SOMEWHERE.

BEFORE ANYBODY COULD ANSWER —

A SHEK
SKYFANG!





HELP!
SOMEBODY PLEASE!

**ROLF WAS NOT
FAR AWAY —**



**HELP IS
AT HAND!**

**ROLF HAD ANTICIPATED SHEK RETALIATION,
AND WAS WAITING IN AMBUSH.**



MISSILE LOCKED
ON TARGET — FIRE!

WHUMP

SCRATCH ONE
SKYFANG!

I WANT YOU ALL TO
COME WITH ME.

WHERE TO?

SOMEWHERE SAFE!

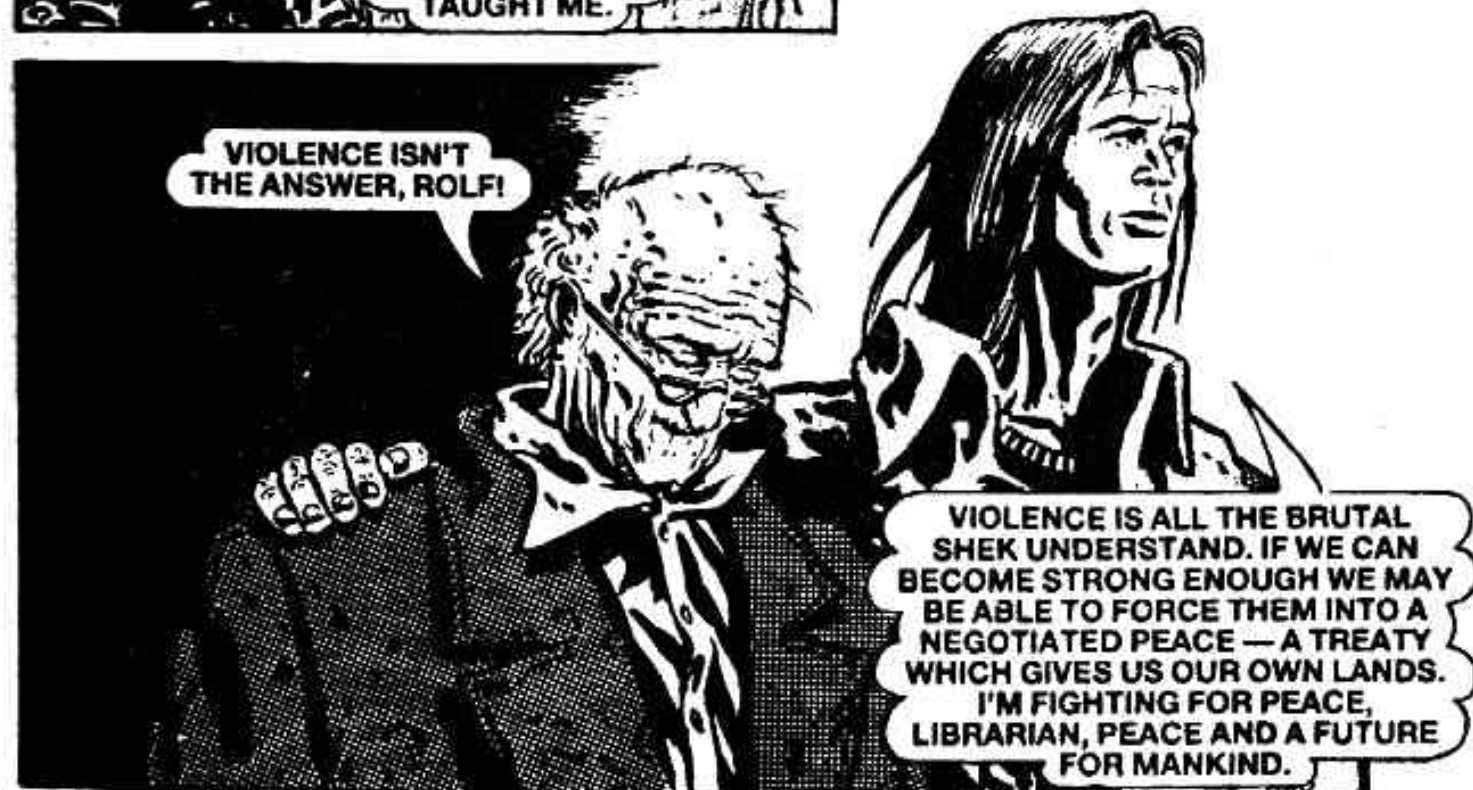
DEEP WITHIN THE SHEK CITADEL.

BRING THE
MANSLAYER TO ME.

AT ONCE,
GENERAL MORLAK.







OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS ROLF HAND-PICKED AND TRAINED AN ELITE GUERRILLA FORCE. STRIKING FROM THE HIDDEN CITY OF NEW YORK THEY BROUGHT CHAOS TO THE ALIEN INVADERS.



A SHEK ARMoured PATROL WAS
SENT TO SEEK OUT AND DESTROY
THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS.

NO SIGN OF
THE EARTHERS!

BUT THEY WERE
CLOSE AT HAND—

KEEP POUNDING THEM!

CONFUSED, THE SHEK BLASTED
AWAY AIMLESSLY—



ROLF WAS A MAN POSSESSED ...



... POSSESSED BY A HATRED OF THE SHEK.



THE BATTLE WAS SOON OVER.



NEARBY—

SO, THEY TOOK THE BAIT
... HOW PREDICTABLE!



THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS MADE THEIR
WAY BACK TO NEW YORK UNAWARE
THAT THEY HAD AN UNINVITED GUEST.





SUDDENLY...



THEY FAILED TO NOTICE THE TRACER.

THE MANSLEYER WAS TAKEN TO ROLF.

LOOK WHO WE CAUGHT
SPYING ON THE CITY.

WHAT SHALL WE DO
WITH HIM, ROLF?

KILL HIM!





NO! DON'T DO IT — YOU CAN'T JUST SHOOT HIM IN COLD BLOOD.



ALIVE... NOT DEAD.





AT THAT MOMENT, INSIDE THE SHEK CITADEL.





ROLF, WAIT! EVEN IF THE MANSAYER IS TELLING THE TRUTH, EVEN IF AGAINST ALL THE ODDS YOUR FAMILY ARE STILL ALIVE, YOU HAVEN'T A HOPE OF RESCUING THEM FROM THE SHEK CITADEL.

I HAVE GOT TO KNOW ... ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

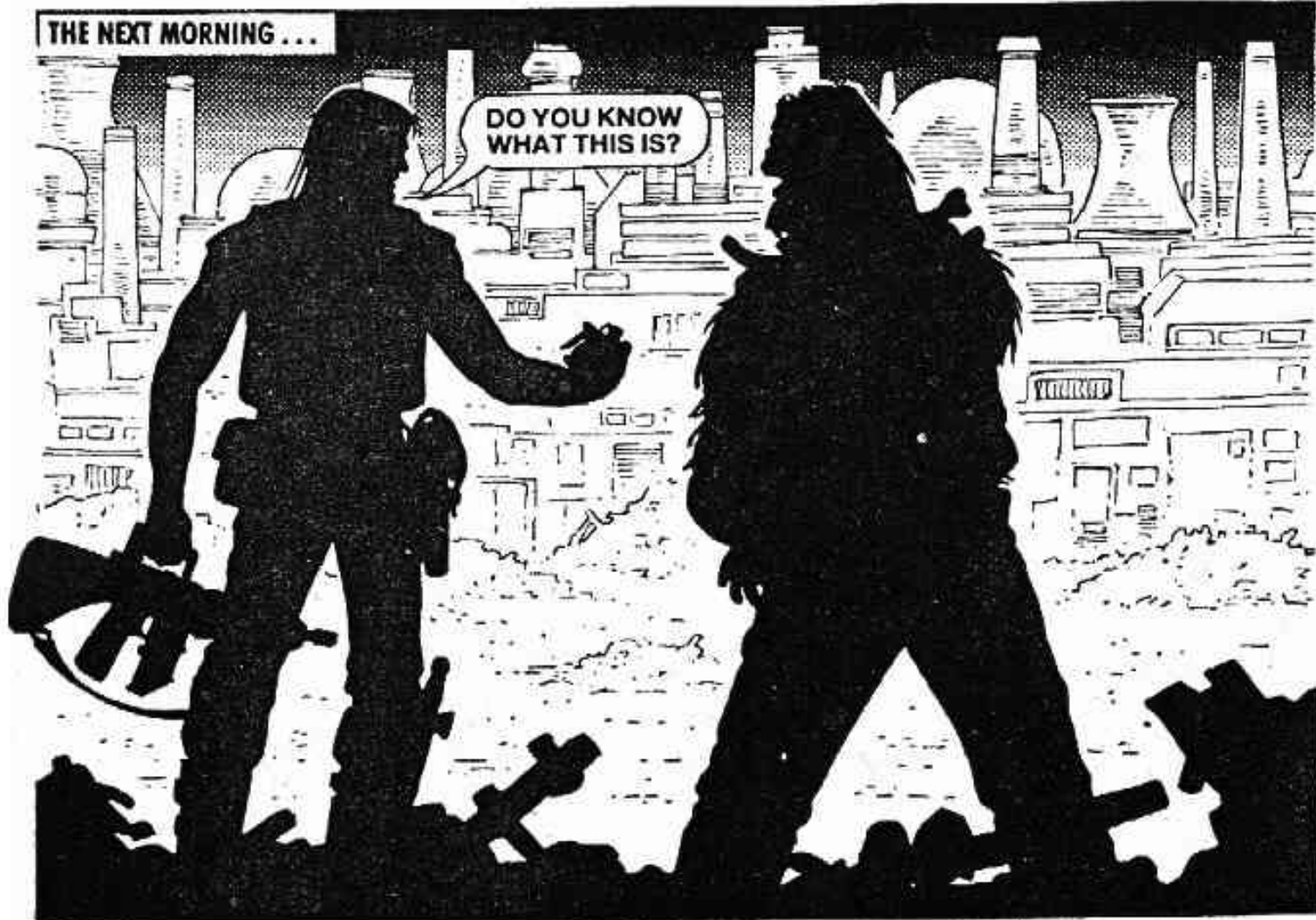
WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE YOU'RE LEAVING BEHIND? WITHOUT YOU TO LEAD THEM THEY WILL BECOME ANIMALS AGAIN. WHAT'S TO BECOME OF YOUR FUTURE FOR MANKIND?

TELL THEM TO FIND ANOTHER LEADER ... I'M NOT CUT OUT TO BE A HERO.

LIKE IT OR NOT, ROLF, YOU'RE ALL THEY'VE GOT.

THE NEXT MORNING ...

DO YOU KNOW
WHAT THIS IS?



IT'S A FRAGMENTATION
GRENADE. ONE PULL ON
THIS RING AND SEVEN
SECONDS LATER YOU'RE
MINCEMEAT!





THE DECEPTION WORKED—

TAKE ME TO MY
PARENTS—NOW!

THIS WAY!



THEY'RE
IN HERE.



FATHER? MOTHER?







YOU'VE GOT SEVEN SECONDS TO SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR FAMILY. HA! HA!

WHILE IN NEW YORK—



THE SHEK HAVE FOUND US!
THEY'RE BLOWING THE TUNNELS.

WE'RE CAUGHT IN A
TRAP... WHERE'S
ROLF?

ROLF HAS GONE AND
HE'S TAKEN THE
MANSLAYER WITH HIM.




BACK IN THE SHEK CITADEL—





NOW TO FIND
MY PEOPLE!

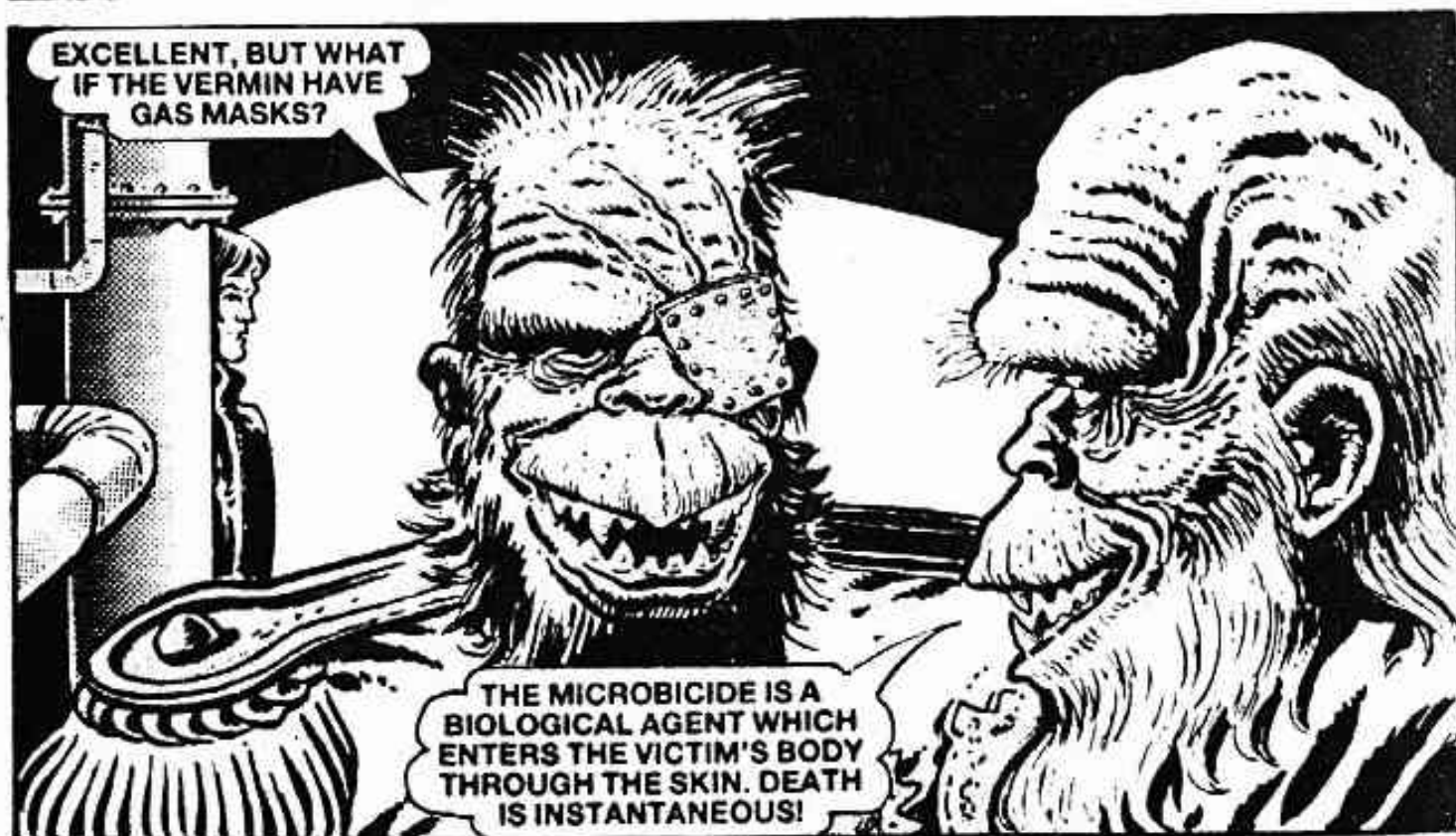


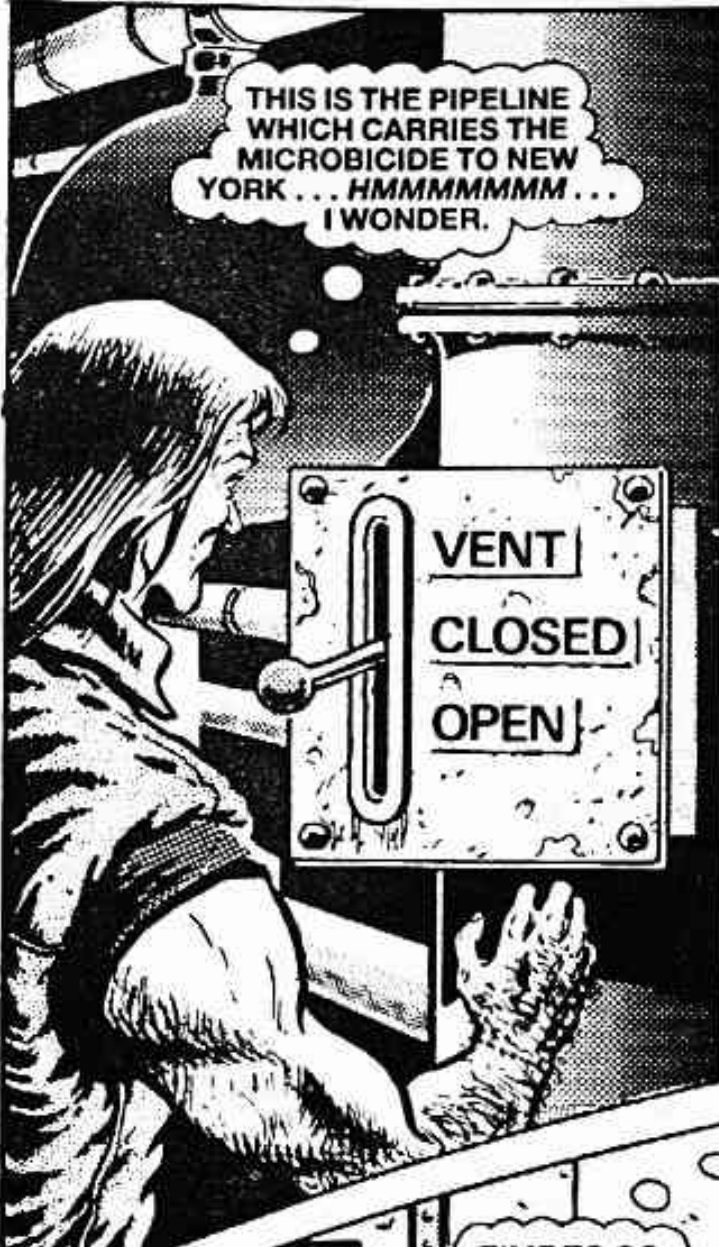
I AM READY FOR YOUR
DEMONSTRATION, KREK.
SHOW ME HOW YOU INTEND
TO ANNIHILATE THE HUMAN
RACE.



ROLF FOUND HIMSELF IN
A HUGE LABORATORY.

VERY WELL, GENERAL.
THE REBELS ARE NOW
SEALED WITHIN THEIR
CAVERN STRONGHOLD,
THE SEALS ARE
MICROBE TIGHT SO
THERE IS NO CHANCE
OF ANY LEAKAGE...





THIS IS THE PIPELINE
WHICH CARRIES THE
MICROBICIDE TO NEW
YORK... HMMMMMMM...
I WONDER.

VENT
CLOSED
OPEN



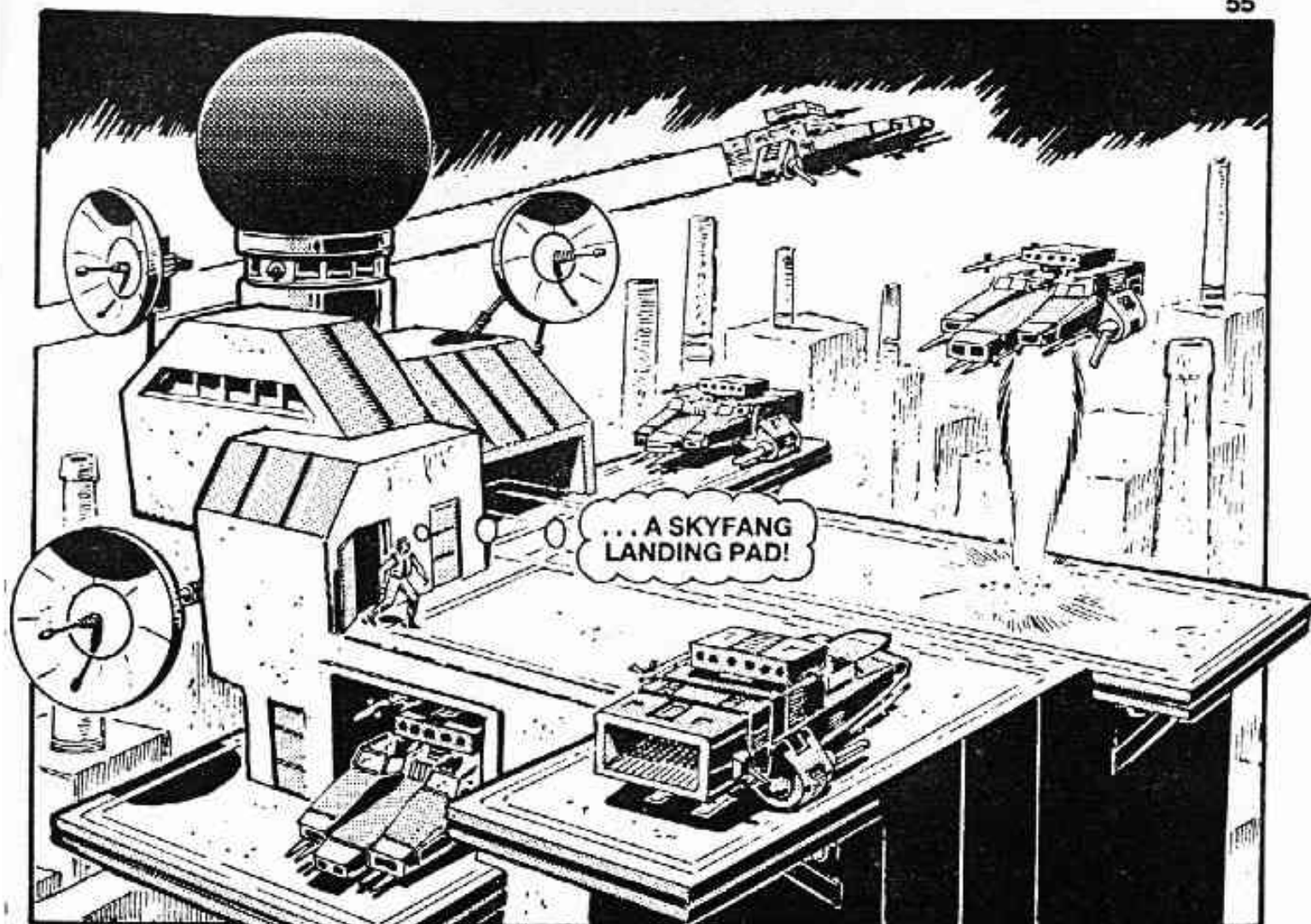
I'VE BEEN SPOTTED!



TIME TO GO.

ONE OF THE LAB
ANIMALS HAS ESCAPED.
— AFTER HIM!











BUT—




EH... A
CATCH NET!



YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE
THAT EASILY! I'M GOING TO
TEAR YOU APART WITH MY
BARE HANDS — RUNT!

THE MANSLAYER!



HE'S CRUSHING ME!



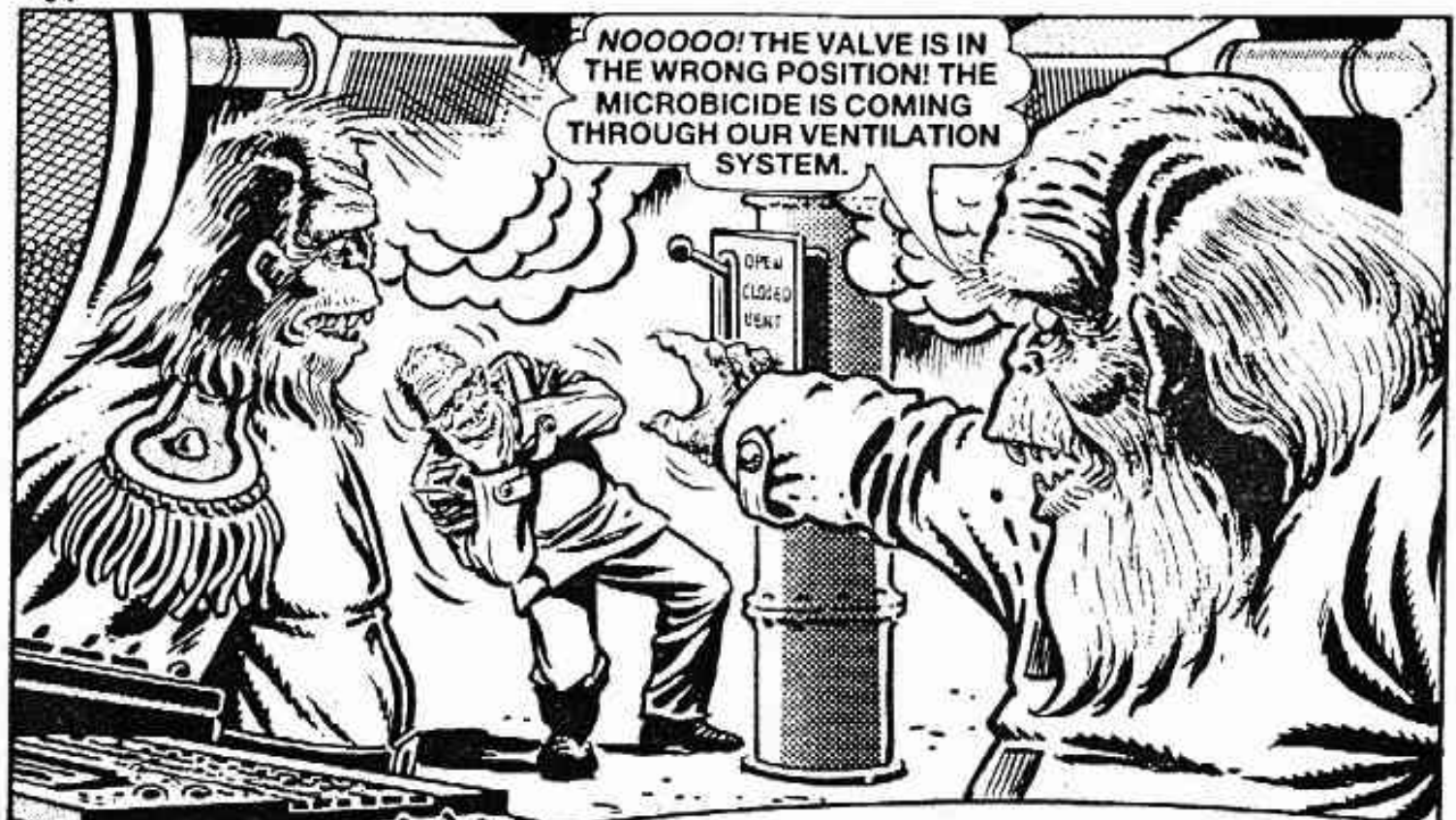




ROLF AND MANSLAYER WERE THROWN INTO THE MICROBICIDE CHAMBER.







NOOOOO! THE VALVE IS IN THE WRONG POSITION! THE MICROBICIDE IS COMING THROUGH OUR VENTILATION SYSTEM.



WE'RE DOOMED!



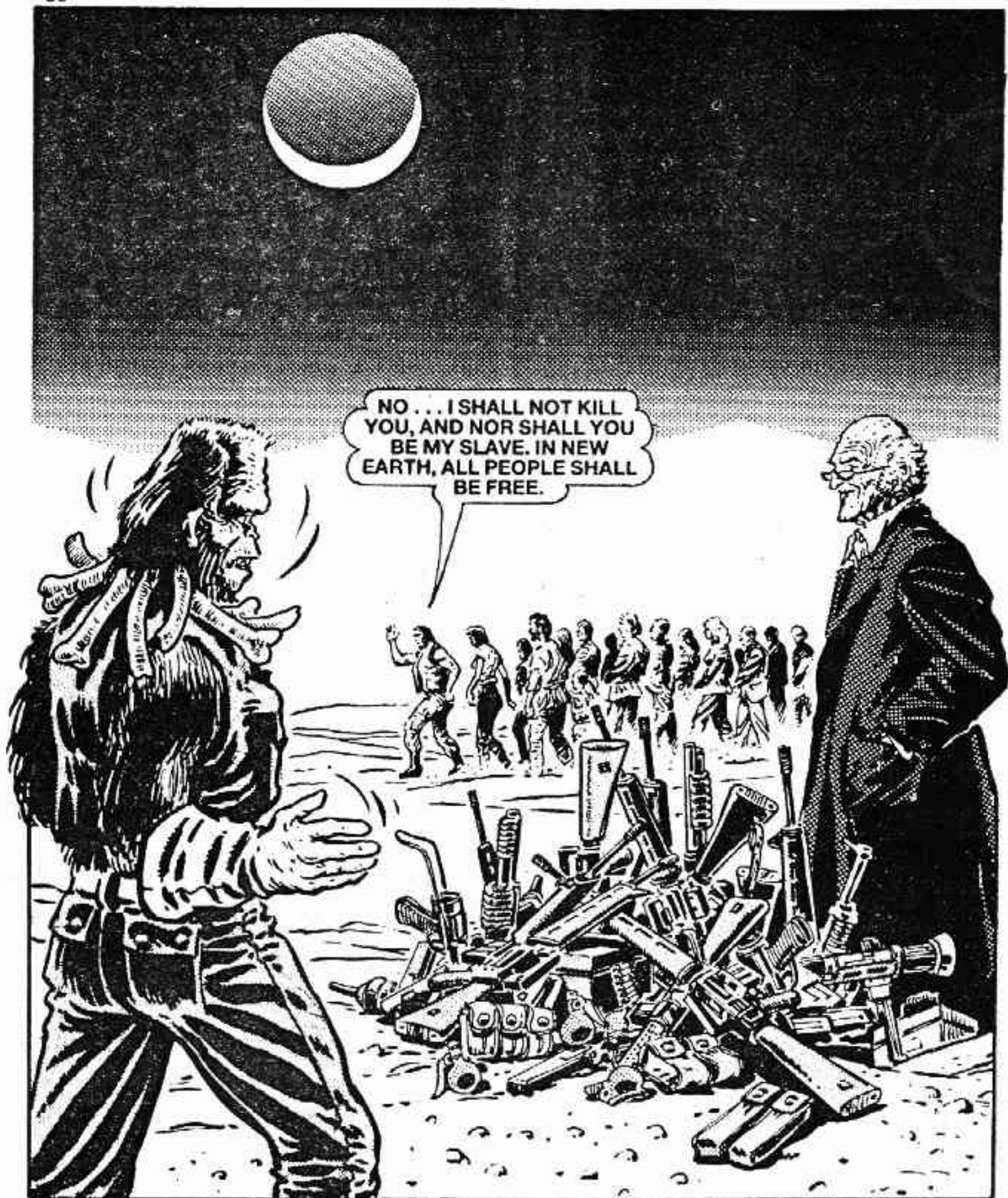
THE NEXT DAY ROLF WAS JOINED BY THE REST OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS.



... SO AS SOON AS WE
BLASTED OUR WAY OUT OF
THE CAVERN WE CAME
LOOKING FOR YOU, ROLF.

NOW, MANSLAYER... WHAT
AM I TO DO WITH YOU?

**DON'T KILL ME! I SHALL
BE YOUR SLAVE.**



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**DON'T
MISS**

**THIS MONTH'S OTHER
ACTION-PACKED
ADVENTURE**



NOW ON SALE

THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS

When Earth was over-run by the brutal Shek race, man was driven into the wilds. No matter where they hid from the bloodthirsty invaders, nobody was safe from the Manslayer and his deadly howlhounds. Nobody, that is, until a fleeing man stumbled upon a secret, deep underground in the remnants of an old Earth civilisation. A secret that was the key to Earth's delivery from the hands of the Shek.

